



# How to rise in hard times

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In the name of Allah, The Most Gracious, The Most Merciful





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Assalamu'alaikum wa rahmatullahi wa barakatuhu,

We pray that this message reaches you  
in good health and imaan.

On behalf of our AMAU Academy team, we would like  
to present to you these compiled notes that we have  
prepared to make your journey with us a lot easier.

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May Allah make our paths toward seeking  
beneficial knowledge easy and kindle our hearts  
with sincerity and gratefulness  
towards Him.

Jazakumullahu Khayran



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## Glossary



جل جلاله | Jalla Jalāluhu  
**Allah the Most Exalted**



صلى الله عليه وسلم | Sallāllāhu Alayhi Wa Sallam  
**Peace and blessings of Allah be upon him**

# The Reason We Face Hardships

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*Chapter One*



Allah ﷻ says in the Qur'ān:

- 1 **يَا أَيُّهَا الْإِنْسَانُ إِنَّكَ كَادِحٌ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ كَدًّا فَمَلِّقِيهِ**  
**"O mankind! Indeed, you are labouring restlessly towards your Lord and will eventually meet (the results of your deeds which you did)."**  
 Surah Al-Inshiqaq 6

This Ayah shows us the reality of worldly life.

It is a phase of our existence that is meant to be difficult and challenging, with hurdles, obstacles, and trials lying in wait for us at every step of the way.

When faced with the realities and hardships of this life, people react and behave differently depending on their level of Imaan.

In this course, we will be looking at how to deal with the hard times we go through in our lives and learn to leverage them to become strong believers who are close to Allah ﷻ.

## A — What Do We Mean by Hard Times?

Hard times are troubles and calamities that befall us in various forms, such as financial struggles, health issues, relationship problems, and more. They can be emotionally and psychologically draining, leaving us feeling helpless and hopeless.

However, as Muslims, we know that Allah ﷻ tests us with difficulties to strengthen our Imaan and improve our character.

He ﷻ says in the Qur'ān:

- 2 **وَلَنَبْلُوَنَّكُمْ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنَ الْخَوْفِ وَالْجُوعِ وَنَقْصٍ مِّنَ الْأَمْوَالِ وَالْأَنْفُسِ وَالثَّمَرَاتِ ۗ وَبَشِّرِ الصَّابِرِينَ**  
**And certainly, We shall test you with something of fear, hunger, loss of wealth, lives, and fruits, but give glad tidings to As-Sâbirûn (the patient)."**  
 Surah Al-Baqarah 155

The patient people (As-Sâbirûn) mentioned in this Ayah are those who react in accordance with Islamic teachings when faced with calamities.

Allah ﷻ also says:

- 3 **أَحْسِبَ النَّاسُ أَنْ يُتْرَكُوا أَنْ يَقُولُوا ءَامَنَّا وَهُمْ لَا يُفْتَنُونَ . وَلَقَدْ فَتَنَّا الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ ۖ فَلَيَعْلَمَنَّ**  
**اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ صَدَقُوا وَلَيَعْلَمَنَّ الْكَذِبِينَ**  
**"Do people think that they will be left alone because they say: 'We believe,' and will not be tested? "And We indeed tested those who were before them. And Allah will certainly make (it) known (the truth of) those who are true, and will certainly make (it) known (the falsehood of) those who are liars, (although Allah knows all that before putting them to the test)."**  
 Surah Al-'Ankabut 2-3

We see from these Ayat that hardships are a part of life, and there is no way we can avoid them.

Allah ﷻ tells us that our claims of belief in Him are going to be put to the test, wherein we will either affirm, establish, and demonstrate our Imaan or fail to do so.

Sadly, some people fall apart at these tests. They are unable to cope and manage themselves appropriately, and as a result, they lose both the Dunya and the Aakhirah.

There are vast differences among mankind when it comes to their reactions to these calamities and hard times. So, we will explore these challenges and discuss strategies for coping with them.

We will also learn about opportunities for growth and development that come our way during hard times and discover ways to maintain a positive attitude throughout the process.



# How to React to Hardships

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*Chapter Two*

## During difficult times,

We often encounter a range of common emotional responses, including fear, anxiety, sadness, anger, and even frustration.

These emotions can have a profound impact on our mental well-being, potentially leading to conditions such as depression and anxiety disorders.



Moreover, they can also manifest physically, causing disruptions in our sleep patterns and alterations in our appetite, resulting in either weight gain or weight loss.

Nevertheless, the most significant and perilous issue that can arise during such challenging periods is the questioning of one's faith, or Imaan. When we examine recent severe calamities, such as earthquakes, we observe two starkly different reactions among people:

01

On one hand, there are those who, despite losing their closest family members, respond with gratitude, saying, **"Alhamdulillah Rabbil 'Aalameen."** They focus on the blessings that remain and find contentment in their faith and trust in Allah's Divine Decree, even amidst the most agonising of trials.

02

Conversely, there are others who question Allah's Decree and express despair, asking, **"Why is Allah doing this? What have we done to deserve such hardship?"**

Upon reflection, we recognize that the same earthquake had vastly different effects on these individuals. Why is this so?

It is because the former individual has built his faith on a solid foundation, while the other lacks the proper foundation from the outset.

Therefore, it is incumbent upon every Muslim to be diligent in constructing the solid foundations of their Imaan during times of ease. By doing so, when calamities inevitably strike, their Imaan will be strong enough to help them navigate these challenges effectively.

In this way, we protect ourselves and preserve our faith, ensuring that we do not fall into the abyss of questioning the existence and Divine Decree of Allah, a path often taken by atheists.

# Practical Steps to Deal With Hardships

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*Chapter Three*

There are some practical steps we can take to deal with hardships in a productive way.

They are as follows:

### A Developing a Growth Mindset

This involves believing that one's abilities can develop through dedication and hard work. Such a mindset allows us to view challenges as opportunities for growth rather than setbacks.

It is important to recognise that Allah ﷻ tests His servants with calamities to elevate their status and expiate their sins.

The Prophet ﷺ has taught us something absolutely fascinating and wonderful about the reality of the believer.

He ﷺ said:

- 1 مَا يُصِيبُ الْمُسْلِمَ مِنْ نَصَبٍ وَلَا وَصَبٍ وَلَا هَمٍّ وَلَا حُزْنٍ وَلَا أَذًى وَلَا غَمٍّ حَتَّى الشَّوْكَةِ يُشَاكُهَا، إِلَّا كَفَّرَ اللَّهُ بِهَا مِنْ خَطَايَاهُ.

**No fatigue, nor disease, nor sorrow, nor sadness, nor hurt, nor distress befalls a Muslim, even if it were the prick he receives from a thorn, but that Allah expiates some of his sins for that.**

Sahih al-Bukhari 5641

So, even minor hardships like anxiety, stress, or worry serve as a means of expiation. Greater calamities expiate a proportionate amount of sins.

For this reason, Allah ﷻ says:

- 2 [...] وَبَشِّرِ الصَّابِرِينَ

**... And give good tidings to the patient.**

Surah Al-Baqarah 155

Because the reward for patience is great.

It is narrated that a female worshipper of Allah once experienced a cut or wound on her finger. Remarkably, she neither complained about the pain nor exhibited any signs of distress. When she was asked about it, she said, “The sweetness of its reward makes me forget the bitterness of bearing it.”

This highlights the positive mindset and approach that we should have when faced with a calamity.

**A believer always seeks his reward from Allah ﷻ and submits to him completely.**



B

Building Resilience and Adaptability

Resilience is the capacity to recover and rebound when faced with adversity, while adaptability is the skill to swiftly and effectively adjust to new situations, circumstances, or environments. These abilities are vital, especially during hard times, as they enhance our ability to manage stress across various scenarios.

C

Seeking Support and Connection

Allah ﷻ is merciful to His servants. If He sends tribulations upon this Ummah, He does so so that we may return and repent to Him and give up everything He has forbidden, and that He may forgive the people of this Ummah.

Hence, whenever a calamity strikes, it is imperative that we turn to Allah ﷻ instead of persisting in our deviations. He ﷻ says:

3

أَوَلَا يَرَوْنَ أَنَّهُمْ يُفْتَنُونَ فِي كُلِّ عَامٍ مَّرَّةً أَوْ مَرَّتَيْنِ ثُمَّ لَا يَتُوبُونَ وَلَا هُمْ يَذْكُرُونَ

**Do they not see that they are tried every year once or twice yet they do not repent nor do they learn a lesson.**

Surah At-Tawbah 126

In hard times, it can be helpful to reach out to family and friends, especially those who are knowledgeable in the religion or connected to scholars. They can offer practical assistance as well as valuable guidance and reminders for our benefit.

It is important to exercise caution and not seek advice from those lacking knowledge, as their advice may inadvertently worsen our situation with misguided ideas contrary to the Qur'ān and the Sunnah, unlike the guidance of those well-versed in the religion. Allah ﷻ says:

4

قُلْ هَلْ يَسْتَوِي الَّذِينَ يَعْلَمُونَ وَالَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ

**Say, "Are those who know equal to those who do not know?"**

Surah Az-Zumar 9

Learning and growing from an experience does not mean suppressing your feelings. When we bury our emotions, they can intensify over time and hinder us from moving past distressing feelings.

Take time to openly discuss your feelings and share your emotions with those who care about you and wish the best for you, instead of bottling them up until they become overwhelming.

Once, when the Prophet ﷺ and his companions went to perform 'Umrah but were prohibited from entering Makkah, he advised them to shave their heads. However, they kept hesitating. In response, the Prophet ﷺ discussed the matter with his wife, Umm Salamah رضي الله عنها. She suggested that he set an example by having his head shaved in front of the companions so that they would follow suit, and this is precisely what occurred.

This incident underscores the significance of seeking guidance from knowledgeable individuals when facing dilemmas.

D Du'aa

Above all, it is crucial to understand that while expressing your concerns to others can be helpful, it should take a back seat to making Du'aa and supplicating to our Creator, the Almighty and Majestic.

The Prophet ﷺ said:

5 أَقْرَبُ مَا يَكُونُ الْعَبْدُ مِنْ رَبِّهِ وَهُوَ سَاجِدٌ فَأَكْثِرُوا الدُّعَاءَ

**The nearest a servant comes to his Lord is when he is prostrating himself, so make supplication (in this state).**

Sahih Muslim 482

We should not be heedless of this reality and always beg Allah ﷻ for help and relief.

He ﷻ is the one who told us:

6 وَإِذَا سَأَلَكَ عِبَادِي عَنِّي فَإِنِّي قَرِيبٌ ۖ أُجِيبُ دَعْوَةَ الدَّاعِ إِذَا دَعَانِ ۖ فَلْيَسْتَجِيبُوا لِي وَلْيُؤْمِنُوا بِي لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْشُدُونَ

**And if My slaves ask you concerning Me then verily I am near. I respond to the supplication of the one invoking me when he calls upon Me. So let them respond to Me and believe in Me, that they may be rightly guided.**

Surah Al-Baqarah 186

When you reflect on the stories of the prophets and righteous individuals in the Qur'an, you'll find that they all turned to Allah ﷻ in times of difficulty.

- **Zakariyya عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ desired a child, and Allah granted him Yahya عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ.**
- **Ya'qub عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ fervently prayed for the return of Yusuf عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ.**
- **Yunus عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ found himself in the belly of a whale, and Allah rescued him from that predicament.**
- **Maryam رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا, when Jibril عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ appeared before her in the form of a man, sought refuge in the Most Merciful, expressing her reliance on Allah.**

In every instance, they entrusted their affairs to Allah, highlighting the fundamental concept of Tawheed that we should strive to live by.

E Setting Realistic Expectations

It is easy to feel demotivated, disappointed, and frustrated when expectations are unrealistic and too difficult to achieve. To avoid these feelings, focus on small daily action steps and deeds that can give you a sense of purpose, progress, and structure.

In addition, connect with people who can share their perspective and experiences with you. They can offer words of encouragement and reinforce important principles that you need to hear.



Always remember that consistency is more important than quantity. The Prophet ﷺ said:

7

اَكْلَفُوا مِنَ الْعَمَلِ مَا تُطِيقُونَ فَإِنَّ خَيْرَ الْعَمَلِ أَدْوَمُهُ وَإِنْ قَلَّ

**Take on only as much as you can do of good deeds, for the best of deeds is that which is done consistently, even if it is little.**

Sunan Ibn Majah 4240

Often people give their best efforts and burn out too soon. Going from doing a lot to doing nothing is not an effective approach. Instead, it is better to do deeds consistently and in moderation, which is more beloved to Allah ﷻ and in line with the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.

Many companions went through a phase where they wanted to read a lot of Qur'ān or fast frequently, and the Prophet ﷺ advised them to practise moderation. Later, as they grew older, they realised they were unable to maintain the consistency of their deeds, and regretted not following the aspect of the Sunnah that calls for moderation.

# Navigating Through Hard Times

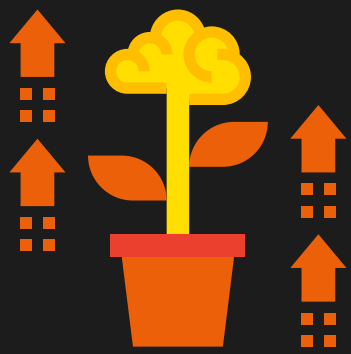
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*Chapter Four*

There are several approaches one can adopt to endure through hard times and emerge stronger and victorious.

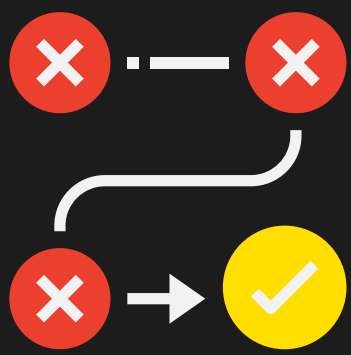
Let us discuss some of them.

1 — Identifying Opportunities for Growth and Development



To navigate challenging times with greater ease, the first step is to actively seek out opportunities for personal growth. This can encompass a wide range of activities, from acquiring new skills to exploring new hobbies.

2 — Learning From Failure and Setbacks



Embrace failure as a learning opportunity rather than a final outcome. It serves as a means to grow stronger by imparting valuable insights about ourselves. Instead of succumbing to it, use it as a stepping stone for self-improvement. Analyse your mistakes and shortcomings so that you can avoid experiencing the same failure twice, with the permission of Allah.

3 — Maintaining a Positive Attitude and Outlook



Embrace failure as a learning opportunity rather than a final outcome. It serves as a means to grow stronger by imparting valuable insights about ourselves. Instead of succumbing to it, use it as a stepping stone for self-improvement. Analyse your mistakes and shortcomings so that you can avoid experiencing the same failure twice, with the permission of Allah.

● Being Grateful to Allah

The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ taught us:

1

نُظَرُوا إِلَى مَنْ هُوَ أَسْفَلَ مِنْكُمْ وَلَا تَنْظُرُوا إِلَى مَنْ هُوَ فَوْقَكُمْ فَإِنَّهُ أَجْدَرُ أَنْ لَا تَزِدَّوْا نِعْمَةَ اللَّهِ

**Look at those who are beneath you and do not look at those who are above you, for it is more suitable that you should not underappreciate the blessings of Allah.**

Sunan Ibn Majah 4142

Allah ﷻ says in the Qur'ān:

2

فَاذْكُرُونِي أَذْكُرْكُمْ وَاشْكُرُوا لِي وَلَا تَكْفُرُونِ

**Remember Me; I will remember you. And thank Me, and never be ungrateful.**

Surah Al-Baqarah 152

3

وَإِذْ تَأَذَّنَ رَبُّكُمْ لَئِنْ شَكَرْتُمْ لَأَزِيدَنَّكُمْ وَلَئِنْ كَفَرْتُمْ إِنَّ عَذَابِي لَشَدِيدٌ

**And 'remember' when your Lord proclaimed, 'If you are grateful, I will certainly give you more. But if you are ungrateful, surely My punishment is severe.**

Surah Ibrahim 7

From the verses mentioned above, we can glean that those who exhibit gratitude and remember Allah ﷻ are bestowed with tremendous honour.

Allah, the King of Kings, the Lord of the Worlds, the Creator of the Heavens and the Earth mentions them to the angels who are nearest to Him. Furthermore the one who is grateful will be increased in favour and blessings by Allah.

● Mindfulness

Focusing on the present moment can be a great way to reduce stress. Instead of constantly worrying about the future, it is better to focus on what is happening right now.

Many people live stressful lives because they are always thinking about "what if this" and "what if that" in the weeks, months, and years ahead. But the reality is, we cannot even be certain if we will be alive tomorrow.

The Prophet ﷺ said:

4

كُنْ فِي الدُّنْيَا كَأَنَّكَ غَرِيبٌ أَوْ عَابِرُ سَبِيلٍ

**Be in this life as if you were a stranger or a traveller.**

Sahih al-Bukhari 6416

Ibn ‘Umar would often say, commenting on this hadith, "If you survive till the evening, do not expect to be alive in the morning, and if you survive till the morning, do not expect to be alive in the evening, and take from your health for your sickness, and (take) from your life for your death."

You should not excessively stress about the future. This does not imply that you should not make plans for your future; instead, it means you should not fixate on them to the point where they become a source of stress for you.

# Coping During Hard Times

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*Chapter Five*



In challenging and stressful situations:

**It is crucial to take care of yourself in a sensible manner.**

You can indulge in a delicious meal or savour refreshments at a cosy cafe.

Alternatively, you can find peace in appreciating nature's beauty by watching the sunset or taking a walk and admiring the wonders of Allah's creation.

The point is to participate in activities that divert your attention from stressors.

Spending quality time with family can provide comfort for some individuals, whereas others may prefer some alone time.

Spouses should be considerate of each other's needs in this regard. For instance, if a wife observes that her husband is feeling down or anxious, she can provide support and be a good listener.

If he prefers some alone time, it is best not to push him to talk, as this could make the situation worse.

Likewise, husbands should be considerate of their wives. Men and women may react differently to frustration or sorrow.

A wife may require time to express her emotions, while a husband might instinctively attempt to resolve the matter immediately.

However, this approach may not always be effective. Husbands should be patient, acknowledge that women may not operate similarly to men, and respect their emotional needs.

Allah ﷻ has assured us that no matter how challenging our circumstances become, there will eventually be relief and ease:

1

فَإِنَّ مَعَ الْعُسْرِ يُسْرًا إِنَّ مَعَ الْعُسْرِ يُسْرًا

**For indeed, with hardship will be ease. Indeed, hardship will be ease.**

Surah Ash-Sharh 5-6

It is worth noting that the concept of ease following hardship is reiterated in this verse. Scholars have provided commentary on this, explaining that no matter how challenging the hardships may seem, the overall state of ease will ultimately prevail. Furthermore, it is important for us to recognize that whatever befalls a believer is ultimately for their benefit.





Allah ﷻ says:

2 كُلُّ نَفْسٍ ذَائِقَةُ الْمَوْتِ وَإِنَّمَا تُوَفَّوْنَ أَجُورَكُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ ۖ فَمَنْ زُحِرَ  
عَنِ النَّارِ وَأُدْخِلَ الْجَنَّةَ فَقَدْ فَازَ [...]

**Every soul shall taste death and you will only be compensated in full on the day of resurrection. So whosoever is moved away from the Fire and admitted to Paradise has attained success. And this worldly life is nothing but enjoyment of delusion.**

Surah Ali 'Imran 185

Let us conclude with the statement of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, where he praised the condition of a believer:

3 عَجَبًا لِأَمْرِ الْمُؤْمِنِ إِنَّ أَمْرَهُ كُلَّهُ خَيْرٌ وَلَيْسَ ذَاكَ لِأَحَدٍ إِلَّا لِلْمُؤْمِنِ إِنْ أَصَابَتْهُ سَرَاءٌ شَكَرَ فَكَانَ  
خَيْرًا لَهُ وَإِنْ أَصَابَتْهُ ضَرَاءٌ صَبَرَ فَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَهُ

**Strange are the ways of a believer for there is good in every affair of his and this is not the case with anyone else except in the case of a believer for if he has an occasion to feel delight, he thanks (God), thus there is a good for him in it, and if he gets into trouble and shows resignation (and endures it patiently), there is a good for him in it.**

Sahih Muslim 2999



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